



**Our Father Among the Saints Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow,
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on January 9.**

Our Father Among the Saints Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, was born in 1507 of noble family and served for a time at the royal court. While still a young man, he secretly left Moscow and entered Solovki Monastery in the north., about the year 1538, a little over a hundred years after its founding. Because of his spiritual stature he was chosen against his will to succeed Abbot Alexis in 1548. as abbot, Philip was a great builder and beautifier of Solovki Monastery. He laid the foundations for the Cathedral of the Transfiguration, constructed cells, hermitages, and a hospital for monks and for pilgrims, established a cattle yard on one of the islands, drained swamps and connected waterways by a series of canals and dams, built a mill and various workshops, and even invented ingenious machines and implements to help the monks in their work. His fame spread, and in 1566, by the will of Tsar Ivan IV, he was raised to the rank of Metropolitan of Moscow.

Tsar Ivan the Terrible revered Philip, even as Herod had revered Saint John the Baptist, and he had been a generous benefactor of Solovki Monastery. But because the Tsar had established the *oprichnina*, a state within a state, giving power to the *oprichniki*, who used it to oppress and rob the innocent, Philip told him that he could not be Metropolitan if the Tsar suffered the *oprichninki* to continue in power. This angered the Tsar; he told Philip that it was not for him to interfere in matters of state, and many hierarchs prevailed upon Philip to accept the Metropolitan's throne. But as the horrors committed by the *oprichninki* grew worse,—thefts, false accusations, murders, and all manner of injustice and

rapacity, with the knowledge of the Sovereign—Saint Philip could not remain silent. He rebuked the Tsar once and again for the reign of terror that he had brought upon his own people. The Tsar warned him to hold his peace and bless him to do as he wished. The Metropolitan answered that his silence brought sin upon the Sovereign. The Tsar threatened him with his wrath, and told him to resign his throne if he were not willing to comply. Saint Philip answered that he had not sought the Metropolitan's throne, and it was the Tsar who had deprived him of his hermitage on Solovki; but now that the pastoral burden was upon him, he would not remain silent when the canons of the Church were broken.

The more the Tsar threatened Philip with his wrath, the more the holy hierarch stood fast and threatened the Tsar with the judgment of God; Philip alone had the courage to rebuke the Tsar openly and oppose his iniquity. Finally the Tsar, finding false witnesses against Philip in his own monastery on Solovki, held a council against him in early November, 1568; the Saint had to endure the persecution of the Tsar who had torn him from his beloved monastery, the betrayal of his fellow hierarchs, and the slanders of his own spiritual children. He was imprisoned in Moscow, but because of the love of the people for him the Tsar feared him even in prison, and he was transferred to a monastery in Tver, where he spent a year in great hardships and continual prayer. On December 23, 1569, a royal messenger came, asking the Metropolitan's blessing for the Tsar's expedition to Novgorod. Saint Philip told him to do that which he came to do, then raised his hands in prayer to God. The Tsar's messenger fell upon him and suffocated the holy hierarch with a pillow. In 1591 his relics were transferred to Solovki, and in 1652 to the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow; many miracles were wrought through his holy relics. (See also Oct. 5 and July 3.)

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Dismissal Hymn of the Feast

WHEN Thou wast baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest; for the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the certainty of the word. O Christ our God, who hast appeared and hast enlightened the world, glory be to Thee.



Dismissal Hymn of the Hierarch. Plagal of Fourth Tone

O SUCCESSOR of first prelates, pillar of Orthodoxy, champion of truth, new confessor, Saint Philip, thou didst lay down thy life for thy flock. Wherefore, since thou hast boldness with Christ, pray for the suffering Russian land and them that worthily honor thy holy memory.

*Kontakion. Fourth Tone
The Original Melody*

ON this day Thou hast appeared * unto the whole world, * and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, * is signed on us who sing Thy praise * and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, * Thou hast appeared, * O Thou Light unapproachable.

Kontakion of the Hierarch. Third Tone

LET us praise most wise Philip, guide and teacher of Orthodoxy, herald of truth, emulator of Chrysostom, lamp of Russia, who fed his children spiritually and with the food of his words; for by chanting praise with his tongue, he taught us to chant with our lips as an initiate of the grace of God.

After the Second Reading from the Psalter, the following Sessional Hymn:

Plagal of Fourth Tone. Thou as the life of all

THE Master of all things hath appeared to us plainly, * that in Jordan's streams He might mystically burn up * all sin as in a furnace, * since He is merciful and supremely good. * Skip for joy, all creation: * for Christ the Lord hath been baptized for our sakes, * He that in truth hath been well pleased as God to save the race of mankind.

SYNAXARION

On the ninth of this month we commemorate the Holy Hieromartyr Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, who was martyred at the command of Tsar Ivan IV of Moscow in the year 1569.



ROYAL DOORS 1425-1427 ΕΘΕ ΟΝ ΤΕΜΡΑ

Of Slavic provenance, these striking Royal Doors in the first level tell us of The Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos by the Archangel Gabriel. The Annunciation is the Beginning of our salvation. The next two levels portray the Evangelists who write icons of Christ with their words. Saint John the Evangelist is characteristically depicted in the panel on the upper left, but we are unable to read the names of other three Gospelwrights, Matthew, Mark and Luke.

The Icon of Christ is the highest data of the Faith. This ineffable truth cannot be expressed otherwise than by historical reality. Thus the struggle in the sixth and seventh centuries for the Icons of Christ and Theotokos was a defense of the very basis of the Christian Faith; the Iconodoules are more properly known simply as the Orthodox Christians.

These Icons are not static, but dynamic. Given Chalcedon's distinction between *Person* and *nature*, and the hierarchical distinction between the unknowable, unparticipatable divine *Essence* and the perceptible, unapproachable *Energy* in God, when St. Theodore the Studite says, "Christ is describable according to His Person, remaining indescribable in His Divinity," he tells us that the Church paints Christ's Person in the icon, but does not, because it cannot, depict the unknowable Essence. Nevertheless, the divine, uncreated Energies are communicated to the Faithful in the Icons of Christ and the Theotokos, as well as in the other Icons of the Saints. (See *Theology of the Icon*, Vol. I by Leonid Ouspensky.)

GLORY BE TO GOD FOR ALL THINGS